

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators: 30 April 2020

New data and experimental indicators on the UK economy and society, including information related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Indicators are constructed from rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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Next release:
7 May 2020

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1 . Other pages in this release

More detailed commentary on the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the UK economy and society is available in the following page:

- [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 30 April 2020](#)

2 . Main points

- 1 in 4 (24%) of surveyed businesses in the UK continuing to trade reported that their turnover had decreased by more than half the normal level, in the period 6 April to 19 April 2020.
- The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was the most popular government scheme applied for, with 66% of all responding businesses, whether continuing to trade or pausing trade in the latest wave, applying.
- Over 8 in 10 adults (84%) in Great Britain said they had either not left their home or only left for the permitted reasons (essential shopping, medical reasons, one form of daily exercise and key workers travelling to work) in the past seven days, for the Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey period 9 April to 20 April; a similar proportion to last week.
- The most common reasons for key worker parents not sending their children to school was the availability of alternative care and being concerned about the health and well-being of the child.
- Overall, online prices of items in the high-demand products (HDP) basket have increased by 0.2% from week 5 (13 April to 19 April) to week 6 (20 April to 26 April).
- Daily shipping data to 26 April 2020 show a gradual decrease in daily ship visits to the UK in the past five weeks.

Online price change analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics. Both the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey (BICS) and Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey are voluntary, so may only reflect the characteristics of those who responded. Results presented are experimental.

3 . Indicators included in this release

This bulletin contains:

- Initial results from Wave 3 of the [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\)](#) of UK businesses for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020.
- Final results for Wave 4 of the Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey, covering the period 9 April to 20 April 2020 exploring the [social impact of the coronavirus](#) on individuals in Great Britain.
- [Experimental online price indices](#) for several high-demand products (HDPs) for 16 March to 26 April 2020.
- [Weekly and daily shipping data](#) for the UK, up to 26 April 2020 for daily data and up to the week commencing 20 April 2020 for weekly data.

We will add new experimental data and indices as and when new data become available, and list them in this section.

This release does not contain data on the number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19). Our [weekly deaths bulletin](#) and [accompanying dataset](#) provide the most up-to-date figures on deaths involving COVID-19 in England and Wales.

4 . Business impact of the coronavirus

Of 17,623 businesses in the UK surveyed, 5,158 (29%) responded for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020.

The latest responses to the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) refer only to those businesses that responded to Wave 3 and do not take into account businesses that responded to previous waves.

As the third wave of this survey covers the period 6 April to 19 April 2020, these initial indicators only cover the business impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic after the closure of all “non-essential” businesses and the announcement of the government’s job retention schemes.

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).

Trading

Excluding businesses that responded as permanently ceasing trade, 24% of responding businesses reported that they had temporarily closed or paused trading, while 76% were continuing trading, (number of businesses surveyed (n) = 5,134).

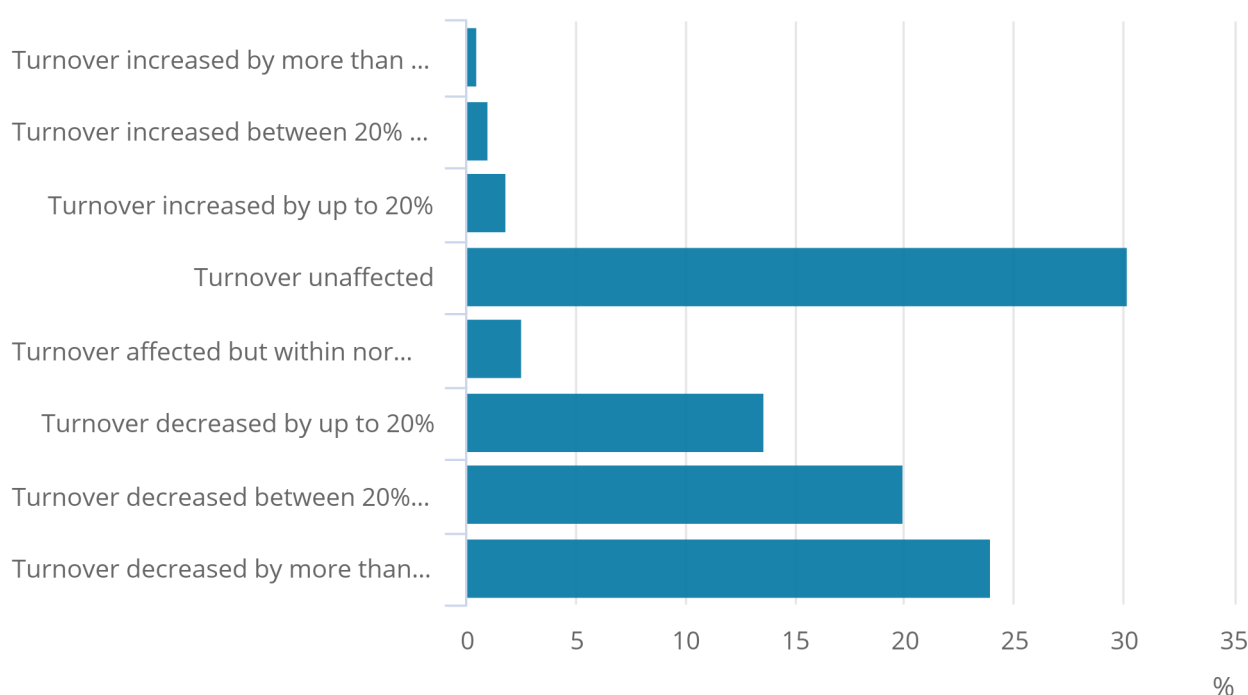
Financial performance

Figure 1: 24% of all businesses continuing to trade reported that turnover had decreased by more than 50%, while 30% reported that their financial performance had been unaffected

Financial performance, percentage of all responding businesses continuing to trade, UK, 6 April to 19 April 2020

Figure 1: 24% of all businesses continuing to trade reported that turnover had decreased by more than 50%, while 30% reported that their financial performance had been unaffected

Financial performance, percentage of all responding businesses continuing to trade, UK, 6 April to 19 April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

Notes:

1. Initial results, Wave 3 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (n = 3,912).
2. Percentages as a proportion of all those continuing to trade, and not just of those who answered this question.
3. Bars will not sum to 100% as the 6.4% of businesses who were "not sure" on their reported turnover are not shown on the chart.

Of all businesses continuing to trade (n = 3,912) for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020, 57% reported that their turnover had decreased in some way (Figure 1). Nearly all businesses (99.7%) who reported that their turnover was abnormally affected in this period attributed this to the coronavirus to some extent.

Of all those businesses continuing to trade (n = 3,912), businesses were asked about their expectations of their turnover in the next two weeks from the reference period, in relation to normal expectations:

- 13% expected turnover to substantially decrease
- 32% expected turnover to decrease a little
- 43% expected it to stay the same
- 7% expected it to increase a little

Government schemes

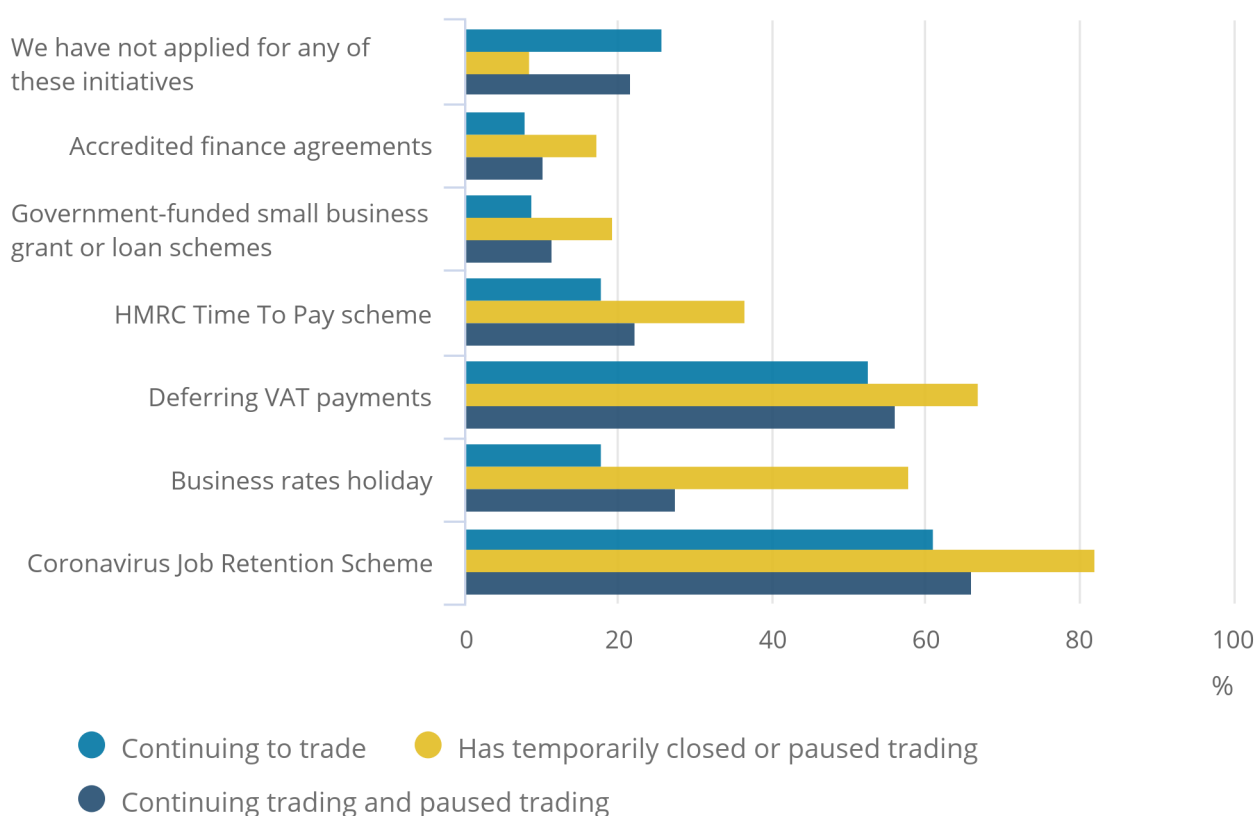
The BICS asks respondents for their experience of the government schemes at the point of completing their questionnaire, rather than for the reference period 6 April to 19 April 2020, with responses collected up until 27 April. For example, though the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme went live on 20 April, businesses could still indicate whether they had applied or received this scheme. Figure 2 shows how rapidly businesses have applied to the available schemes.

Figure 2: 66% of those businesses continuing to trade, or who have paused trading, applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, while 56% applied to defer VAT payments

Percentage of all government schemes applied for, businesses continuing to trade and paused trading, UK

Figure 2: 66% of those businesses continuing to trade, or who have paused trading, applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, while 56% applied to defer VAT payments

Percentage of all government schemes applied for, businesses continuing to trade and paused trading, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

Notes:

1. Bars will not sum to 100% as businesses could select multiple schemes.
2. Initial results, Wave 3 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (Continuing Trading + Paused Trading = 5,134).
3. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme went live on 20 April - businesses were able to indicate whether they had applied or received this scheme at the point of completing their questionnaire, with responses collected up until 27 April.

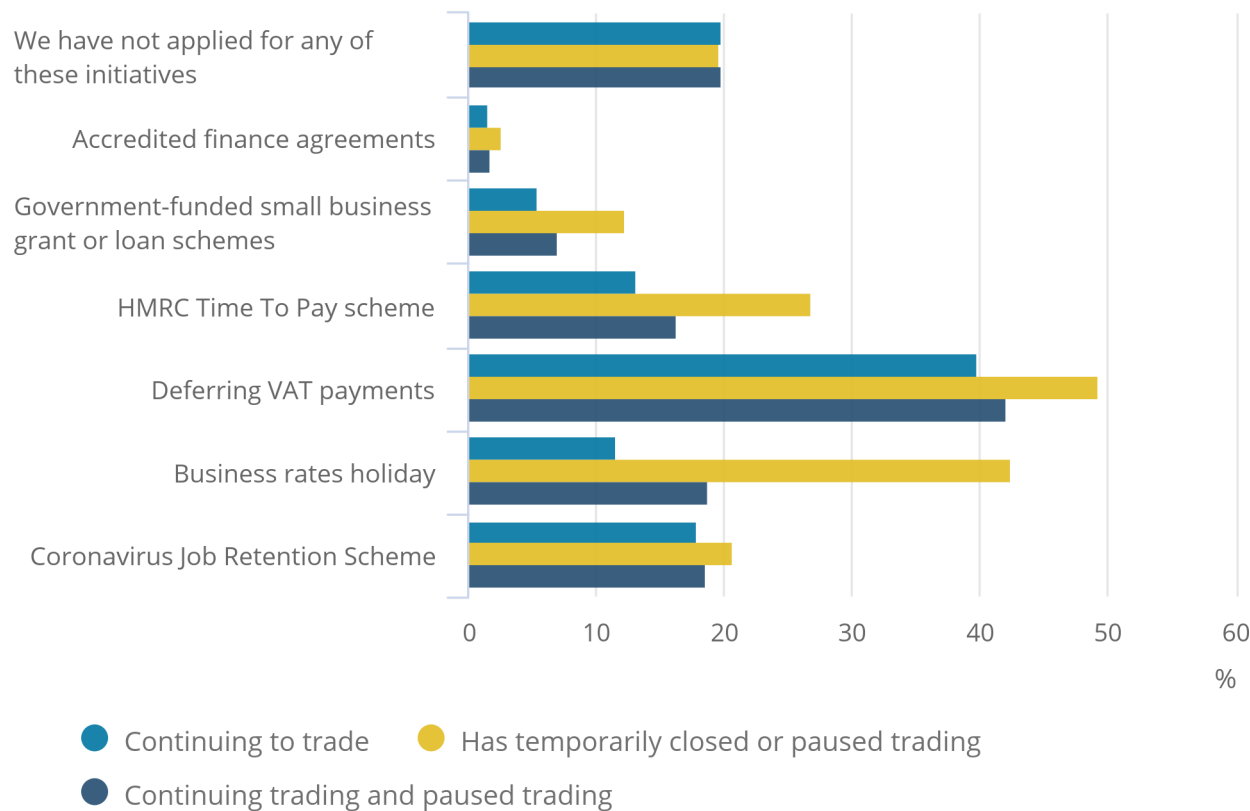
Businesses who reported they were continuing to trade, or who had paused trading between 6 April and 19 April 2020, were also asked what government schemes they had received at the point at which they completed the questionnaire, up until 27 April.

Figure 3: The Deferring VAT Payments Scheme was the scheme with the largest percentage of businesses continuing to trade and paused trading reporting they had received this, at 42%

Percentage of all government schemes received, businesses continuing to trade and paused trading, UK

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Percentage of all government schemes received, businesses continuing to trade and paused trading, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

Notes:

1. Bars will not sum to 100% as businesses could select multiple schemes.
2. Initial results, Wave 3 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (Continuing Trading + Paused Trading = 5,134).
3. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme went live on 20 April - businesses were able to indicate whether they had applied or received this scheme at the point of completing their questionnaire, with responses collected up until 27 April.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was the most popular government scheme that was applied for by businesses that indicated they were continuing to trade or had paused trading in the period 6 April to 19 April 2020. There were 61% of businesses continuing to trade (n = 3,912) and 82% of businesses who have paused trading (n = 1,222) applying (Figure 2). For both those respondents continuing to trade, and those who had temporarily paused trading, 19% of businesses reported having received the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Figure 3).

The Deferring VAT Payment Scheme was the second-most popular scheme, with 67% of businesses temporarily pausing trade applying for the scheme, compared with 53% of businesses continuing to trade applying (Figure 2). In total, of these businesses, just 42% of businesses had received support through this scheme (Figure 3).

The Business Rates Holiday Scheme was the second main government scheme used by those who reported having temporarily paused trading, with 42% reporting they had received support from this (Figure 3). The second main government scheme to have been used by businesses continuing to trade was the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

5 . Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain

Results from the new Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey covering the period 9 April to 20 April 2020; these are to help understand the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Following government guidance to prevent the spread of the coronavirus

Official government advice is for everyone to [stay in their homes](#) apart from for a limited number of reasons such as essential shopping, medical reasons, one form of daily exercise and key workers travelling to work where it is not possible to work from home.

Staying at home

Over 8 in 10 adults (84%) said they had either not left their home, or only left for one of the permitted reasons listed earlier in the past seven days, a similar level to last week (85%). This increased to 88% for those aged 70 years and over, and for those with an underlying health condition, it was 86%.

Of the 16% who said they had left their home for something else the main reason was to run errands.

There continued to be a high level of support for the “stay at home” measures, with 84% of adults saying they strongly supported the measures and a further 13% saying they “tend to support” the measures.

Self-isolation

Alongside the “stay at home” guidance, official advice is that people should self-isolate if they or someone in their household experiences symptoms related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Some people may choose to self-isolate for other reasons, so these results should not be interpreted as an estimate of those with COVID-19 symptoms or those diagnosed with COVID-19.

Of all adults, 30% said they had self-isolated in the past seven days, a decrease from 38% last week. For those aged 70 years and over, 50% said they had self-isolated, while for those with an underlying health condition (all ages), it was 43%.

Working from home

A decreased proportion of adults in employment said they had worked from home at some point this week (45%) compared with last week (49%).

This consisted of 39% that had only worked from home and 6% that had both worked from home and travelled to work (both key workers and non-key workers). A further 26% of adults in employment said they had travelled to work in the last seven days and had not worked from home. Of all employed adults, 30% had neither worked from home nor travelled to work; the reason for this is not known but could be because of the person being on leave, sick leave, furloughed or being off-shift during the reference seven days.

Impact on well-being

The proportion of adults saying their well-being is affected is continuing to decrease this week (46%) compared with last week (50%). The proportion remains higher for those with an underlying health condition, at 58% and lower for those aged 70 years and over, at 38%.

Table 1: Indicators of well-being

Indicator	Group	This week (%)	Last week (%)
Wellbeing is being affected	All adults	45.8	49.9
	70 years and over	38.2	45.5
	Underlying health	57.7	55.6
Mean anxiety score*	All adults	4.2	4.9
	70 years and over	4.2	5.0
	Underlying health	4.9	5.4
Percentage with high anxiety (score 6 to 10)*	All adults	35.7	46.4
	70 years and over	34.6	49.8
	Underlying health	45.7	56.6
Feeling lonely often or always	All adults	3.8	5.8
	70 years and over	3.5	3.6
	Underlying health	8.9	7.3
Feeling lonely some of the time	All adults	16.7	20.5
	70 years and over	13.9	10.9
	Underlying health	22.1	20.4

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes

1. * On a scale of 0 to 10 how anxious did you feel yesterday? [Back to table](#)
2. “This week” refers to the period 9 April to 20 April 2020, and “last week” refers to the period 3 April to 13 April 2020. [Back to table](#)

Key workers

This week we have the first estimates of the opinions and experiences of key workers.

Key workers have been identified if a respondent has self-reported they have been given “key worker status” only. It has not been defined by an official list of occupations or industries in which people work.

Of all key workers, 85% said they are very or somewhat worried about the effect the coronavirus is having on their life compared with 82% of all adults. The most common issue affecting key workers was the impact on their work, with 60% saying this was the case. In comparison, the most common issue for all other adults was the inability to make plans. Of those key workers who said their work had been affected, the most common issue was a concern about their health and safety at work.

Nearly 2 in 3 (64%) key workers with dependent children had homeschooled their children over the past seven days – a similar level to all parents or guardians at 66%.

Although schools have been closed to most pupils, they have remained open for vulnerable children and children of key workers. However, a large majority of key workers said they had not sent their child to school in the past seven days. This survey collection ran over the Easter period. Schools remained open during this time, but it may have affected the proportion of key workers sending their children to school.

The most common reasons given by key worker parents for not sending their children to school were the availability of alternative care (34%) and concern for the health and well-being of their child (30%).

6 . Online price change for high-demand products (HDP)

A timely indication of weekly price change for high-demand products (HDP) has been developed, covering the period 16 March to 26 April 2020. This analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics.

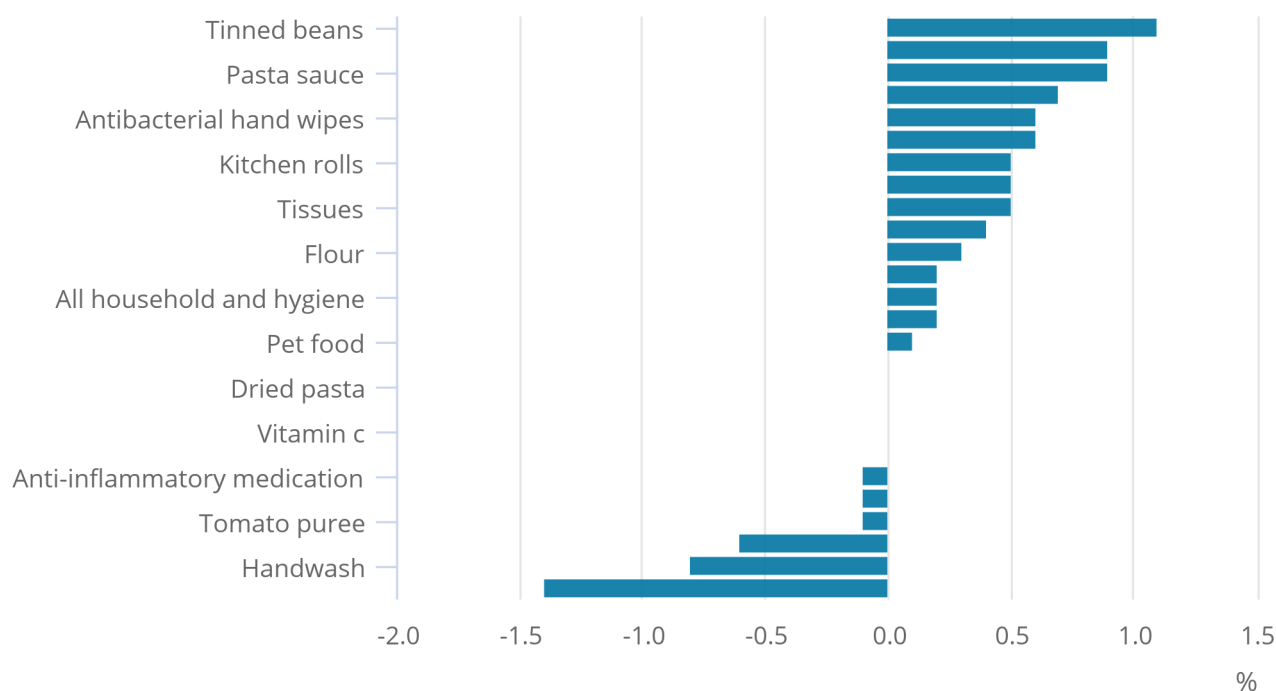
In last week's bulletin, our experimental online price indices were temporarily suspended to give us time to improve the way our automated web-scrapers collected prices from one particular high-street retailer. The data have now been corrected for the initial data collection error last week and we have also taken the opportunity to improve our retailer weights and classification methods. More information on the retailers and items included within the HDP basket, and the methods and sources used, is available in [Online price changes for HDPs methodology](#).

Figure 4: Overall, online prices of items in the high-demand products (HDP) basket have increased by 0.2% over the period week 5 to week 6

Online price change of high-demand products: percentage change between week 5 (13 April to 19 April), and week 6 (20 April to 26 April 2020), UK

Figure 4: Overall, online prices of items in the high-demand products (HDP) basket have increased by 0.2% over the period week 5 to week 6

Online price change of high-demand products: percentage change between week 5 (13 April to 19 April), and week 6 (20 April to 26 April 2020), UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. These statistics are experimental and should not be used instead of official statistics.
2. Out of stock products have been removed where these are clearly labelled, however, there may be products out of stock that have still been included for some retailers. If the price of these items do not change, this could cause the index to remain static.

Overall, online prices of items in the HDP basket have increased by 0.2% from week 5 to week 6, with tinned beans, rice and pasta sauce seeing the largest price increases (Figure 4). Compared with previous weeks, between week 5 and week 6, the price changes of individual items were generally more stable. Apart from one item at each extreme, all the rest lie within the negative 1% to 1% weekly price change range. Note that the size of the sample means that sometimes single retailers can contribute to substantial movements at the item level.

Figure 5 presents weekly price movements for aggregated indices and some selected items. The all HDP items index shows a stable increase over time, with an increase of 1.3% since week 1. The index of all food items in the HDP basket is slightly more volatile than the other indices, but it has seen steady growth for the last couple of weeks, resulting in a 1.6% increase compared with week 1.

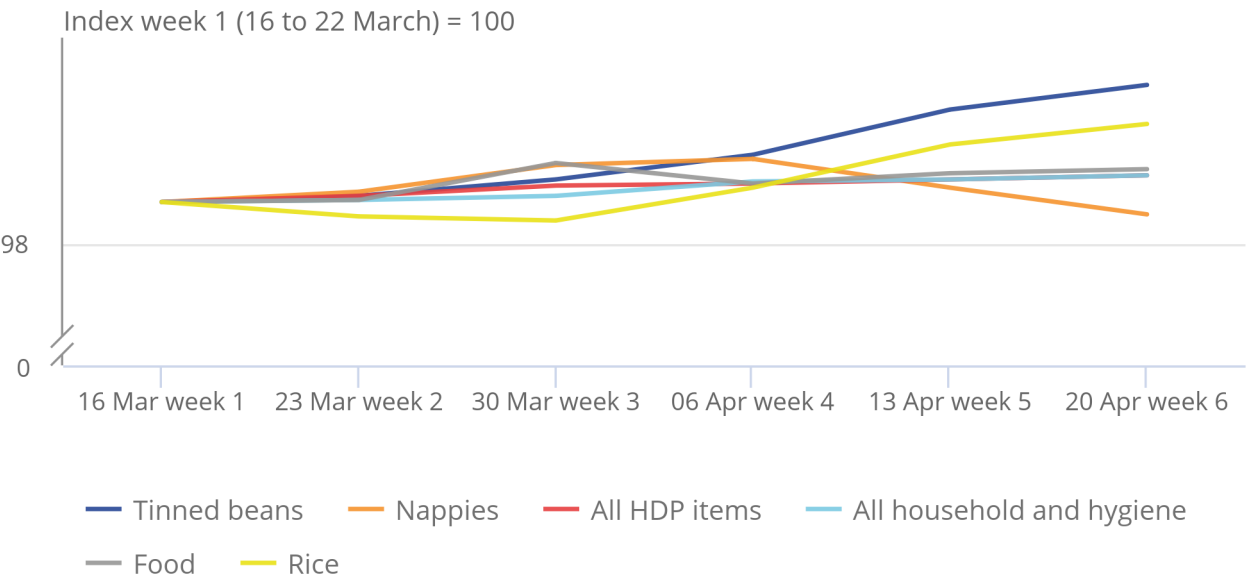
At the individual product level, the price of tinned beans has increased steadily across the six-week period, while rice saw an initial fall in price followed by strong growth from week 3. Nappies saw the biggest price fall from week 5 to week 6 of 1.4%; at the start of the six-week period, their prices rose but they have since stabilised and fallen, a trend separately shown by a number of retailers. The time series for all individual HDP items are published in a [dataset](#) alongside this release.

Figure 5: The all high-demand products items index shows a stable increase over time, with an increase of 1.3% since week 1

Online price change of selected high-demand products: index week 1 (16 to 22 March) = 100, UK

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Online price change of selected high-demand products: index week 1 (16 to 22 March) = 100, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- 1. These statistics are experimental, and should not be used instead of official statistics.

7 . Shipping

This section discusses the shipping indicators based on counts of all vessels. We have advanced the timeliness of these indicators to include up to 26 April 2020 for daily data and up to the week commencing 20 April 2020 for weekly data.

As discussed in [Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping](#), we expect the shipping indicators to be related to the import and export of goods.

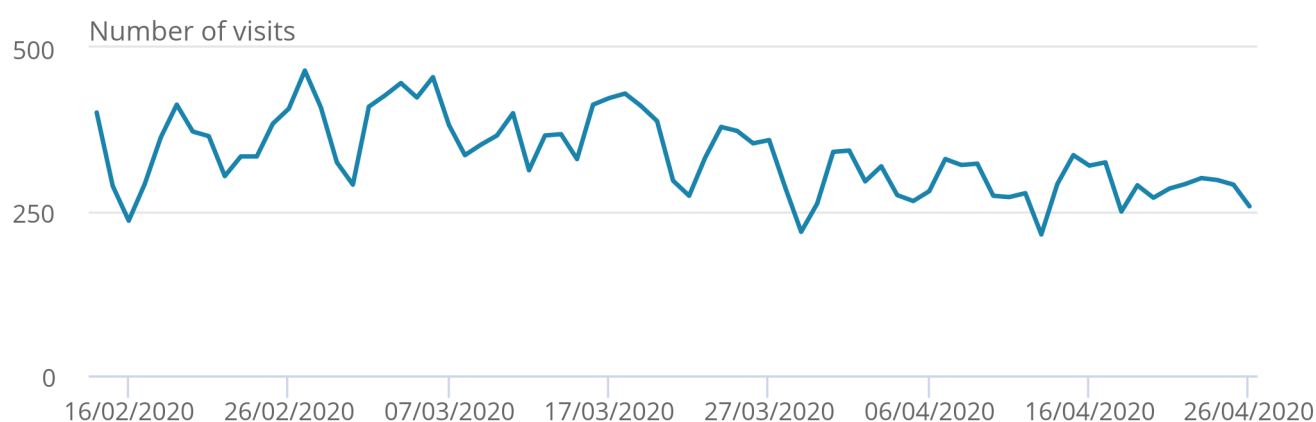
In the week commencing 20 April, the number of unique visits to UK ports increased by 1.1%. Total visits to UK ports decreased by 2.0% in the same period.

Figure 6: There has been a gradual decrease in daily ship visits to major UK ports during the past few weeks

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, not seasonally adjusted, 14 February 2020 to 26 April 2020

Figure 6: There has been a gradual decrease in daily ship visits to major UK ports during the past few weeks

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, not seasonally adjusted, 14 February 2020 to 26 April 2020



Source: exactEarth

8 . Data

[Weekly and daily shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 30 April 2020

The weekly and daily shipping indicators dataset associated with the faster indicators of UK economic activity.

[Online price changes for high-demand products](#)

Dataset | Released 30 April 2020

Weekly online price changes of selected high-demand products (HDP).

9 . Glossary

Faster indicator

A faster indicator provides insights into economic activity using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or experimental statistics, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

High-demand product (HDP) basket

A HDP basket means everyday essential items that currently have a high consumer demand, including items from food, health and hygiene categories. The selection of these items was based on anecdotal evidence on patterns of consumer spend. The basket does not cover all items within these categories.

Key workers

Key workers have been identified in the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) if a respondent has self-reported they have been given “key worker status” only. It has not been defined by an official list of occupations or industries in which people work.

Dependent children

Questions about homeschooling in the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) are asked when the responding individual has a dependent child in their household. A dependent child is defined as someone who is under the age of 16 years, or someone who is aged 16 to 18 years old and has never been married and is in full-time education.

In employment

For the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) survey, a person is said to be “in employment” if they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; or they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.

10 . Measuring the data

Shipping

These weekly and daily faster shipping indicators data are created through new [experimental](#) methods and are not [official statistics](#). More quality and methodology information is available in [Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping](#).

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

The business indicators are based on responses from the voluntary, fortnightly [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey](#), which captures business' views on impact on turnover, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. The data relate to initial wave 3 results, covering the survey period 6 April to 19 April 2020 and the survey questions for the period are available in [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey questions 6 April to 19 April 2020](#).

Table 2: Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey sample sizes, broken down by main trading and turnover status

Trading and turnover status categories	Number of responding businesses
Total	5,158
Continuing to trade	3,912
Has permanently ceased trading*	24
Has temporarily closed or paused trading	1,222

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

Notes

1. *These numbers are provided for completeness. Although businesses that reported as having permanently closed in a previous wave are not expected to continue to respond to subsequent waves some have continued to respond as being permanently closed. Since the launch of BICS, approximately 30 unique businesses have reported as permanently ceasing trade across all three waves. [Back to table](#)

Estimates from the BICS are currently unweighted and should be treated with caution when used to evaluate the impact of the coronavirus across the UK economy. Each business was assigned the same weight regardless of turnover, size or industry.

More information on the quality and methodology, including response rates, sample size and weighting, is available in the "Measuring the data" section of the [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK bulletin](#).

Social impact of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Data on the social impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on Great Britain were collected from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) and the [Labour Market Survey](#) (LMS). The data related to final Wave 4 results, for the period 9 to 20 April 2020. In this wave, 2,010 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 71.1% (or 1,430 individuals) for the survey.

More information on the quality and methodology of the OPN Survey is available in the "Measuring the data" section of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#) bulletin.

Online price change for high-demand products (HDP)

Prices were scraped daily from several large online UK retailers (typically supermarkets and other prominent high-street chains with an online presence) from 16 March to 26 April 2020 for selected items chosen to form the HDP basket (see Table 1 in the [online price changes for HDPs methodology](#)). An average weekly price was then calculated for each unique product and a movement splice GEKS-Jevons index was calculated using a rolling window of five weeks.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the online price changes data is available in the [Online price changes of high-demand products methodology](#).

11 . Strengths and limitations

Shipping indicators

It should be noted that these indicators are not intended to be an early measure or predictor of gross domestic product (GDP), and their potential relationship with headline GDP should be interpreted with caution. Instead, they provide an early picture of a range of activities that are likely to have an impact on the economy, supplementing official economic statistics.

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

The Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) is voluntary and responses are qualitative, which should be treated with caution as results reflect the characteristics of those who responded and not necessarily the wider business population.

These data should not be used in place of official statistics. The survey was designed to give an indication of the impact of the coronavirus on businesses and a timelier estimate than other surveys.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the BICS data is available in the "Strengths and limitations" section of the [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK](#) bulletin.

Social impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) (OPN)

More information on the strengths and limitations of the OPN Survey is available in the "Strengths and limitations" section of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#) bulletin.

Online price change for high-demand products (HDP)

These experimental online price changes data should not be compared with the headline [Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs \(CPIH\)](#). The CPIH is produced using different methods, data and quality thresholds, and incorporates a broader range of goods and services, such as housing.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the online price changes data is available in the [Online price changes of high-demand products methodology](#).

Publication of coronavirus (COVID-19)-related data

We will be publishing this faster indicator bulletin on a weekly basis during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is to ensure we are meeting user needs for more timely data. We will be adding new data and experimental indicators as and when data become available each week.

This publication will include regular updated data from the new fortnightly survey, BICS, online prices for high-demand products and weekly indicators from the OPN Survey on social impact of the coronavirus.

12 . Related links

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Web page | Updated as and when data become available

Latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

[Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\) questions: 23 March 2020 to 5 April 2020](#)

Article | Released on 16 April 2020

Questions from the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey for the period 23 March to 5 April 2020 relating to the coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators weekly bulletin.

[Rapid review of coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators](#)

Webpage | Released on 9 April 2020

Letter from Ed Humpherson, the Director General for Regulation at the UK Statistics Authority, endorsing the ONS's new experimental faster indicators.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 17 April 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 28 April 2020

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.